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Redevelopment Board Minutes 04/21/2004

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Meeting of April 21, 2004

Members Present: Ed Tsoi
 Barry Faulkner
 Roly Chaput
 Nora Mann, 7:00
 Lynne Lowenstein, 7:30

Also Attending: Kevin J. O'Brien, Dir. of Planning & Community Development
 Joey Glushko, Planner

Ed Tsoi called the meeting to order at 7:10 and asked to postpone the scheduled hearing for a few minutes until another Board member showed up.

Kevin O'Brien then took up items under the Director's report. Barry Faulkner moved and Roland Chaput seconded a motion to accept the minutes for March 29 and April 12, 2004, and with some amendments to March 29, 2004.

Chairman Ed Tsoi signed the lease with Schools for Children for space in the Gibbs School building. Kevin O'Brien notified the Board that the building being constructed at 980 Mass. Ave. must be moved two feet further from the road by reducing its size because a storm drain was found to be closer to the building than shown on plans.

At 7:20 Ed Tsoi requested that the applicant for a special permit at 19R Park Ave present the shadow study, which was provided to the Board in printed form. Richard Keshian, attorney for the applicant, introduced Ken Larson to present the study.

Nora Mann arrived at 7:30 and Lynne Lowenstein arrived at 7:35. The Applicant then discussed the changes in the project since the last hearing. The Board discussed allowing left turn entrances to the site from Park Ave. and decided that allowing such turns was preferable to making such vehicles drive through Downing Square to get into the project.

Nora Mann moved that the project as configured as shown in the shadow study receive a special permit, asking that the applicant consider removing the dormer on the northeast corner of the building and under the general and special conditions delineated in the report of the Director of Planning dated January 2, 2004. Barry Faulkner seconded the motion and it was voted favorably 5 – 0.

At 8:05 Lynne Lowenstein moved that the Board enter into Executive Session in order to discuss the status of negotiations concerning the Sale of the Symmes property which might affect the price of the property if the discussion were held in open session. Ed Tsoi seconded the motion, and Kevin O'Brien polled the members: Lynne Lowenstein – yes, Ed Tsoi – yes, Nora Mann – yes, Roland Chaput – yes, and Barry Faulkner – yes.

At 8:35 the Board left Executive Session to discuss the Symmes project progress with Jake Upton and Patrick McMahon from E.A. Fish Associates. All discussed progress, issues, schedule, the impacts of housing affordability, environmental findings, and ledge impacts.

Jake Upton distributed a worksheet showing how different program combinations affect the price of the site. Barry Faulkner said the 15% affordable may be acceptable as in alternate three. Lynne Lowenstein was concerned that the medical use was not as much as proposed, and Roland Chaput expressed the same disappointment. Nora Mann wondered about an option with 50,000 – 60,000 square feet of medical use and still have 15% affordable housing. She pointed out that it is not just the ARB that must vote on this, but the deal must be sold to the Town. Ed Tsoi indicated that alternate three was the most acceptable. The ARB must respond to the Town but can't load the program up so that the project fails – we are partners. He summarized that price cannot be

less than \$11 million, cannot be less than 15% affordable, and medical use is a cause celebre, not a question of “if” but of “how much”.

At 9:45, the Board recognized members of the Housing Corporation of Arlington. David Levy, Executive Director, explained the activities of the Corporation. The discussion centered around the affordable housing at the Symmes site.

At 10:10, Ed Tsoi introduced Leslie Mayer of the Parks and Recreation Commission, who spoke to the Board about Warrant Article 13, which proposes to allow advertising signs at athletic fields.

The Board then considered a request from Paul Morrison to allow Symmes’ neighbors to have access to the ARB’s consultants. The Board determined that its consultants must answer only to the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O’Brien

April 21, 2004

Executive Session

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The Board discussed the negotiation with Jeff Mullan and Joe Tulumieri. Symmes Advisory Committee members, Brian Rehrig and Elizabeth Carr Jones, were included in the Executive Session discussion. Board members expressed their priorities on the issues being discussed.

At 8:35 Lynne Lowenstein moved that the Board end the Executive Session, Ed Tsoi seconded the motion, and Kevin O’Brien polled the members: Lynne Lowenstein – yes, Ed Tsoi – yes, Nora Mann – yes, Roland Chaput – yes, and Barry Faulkner – yes.